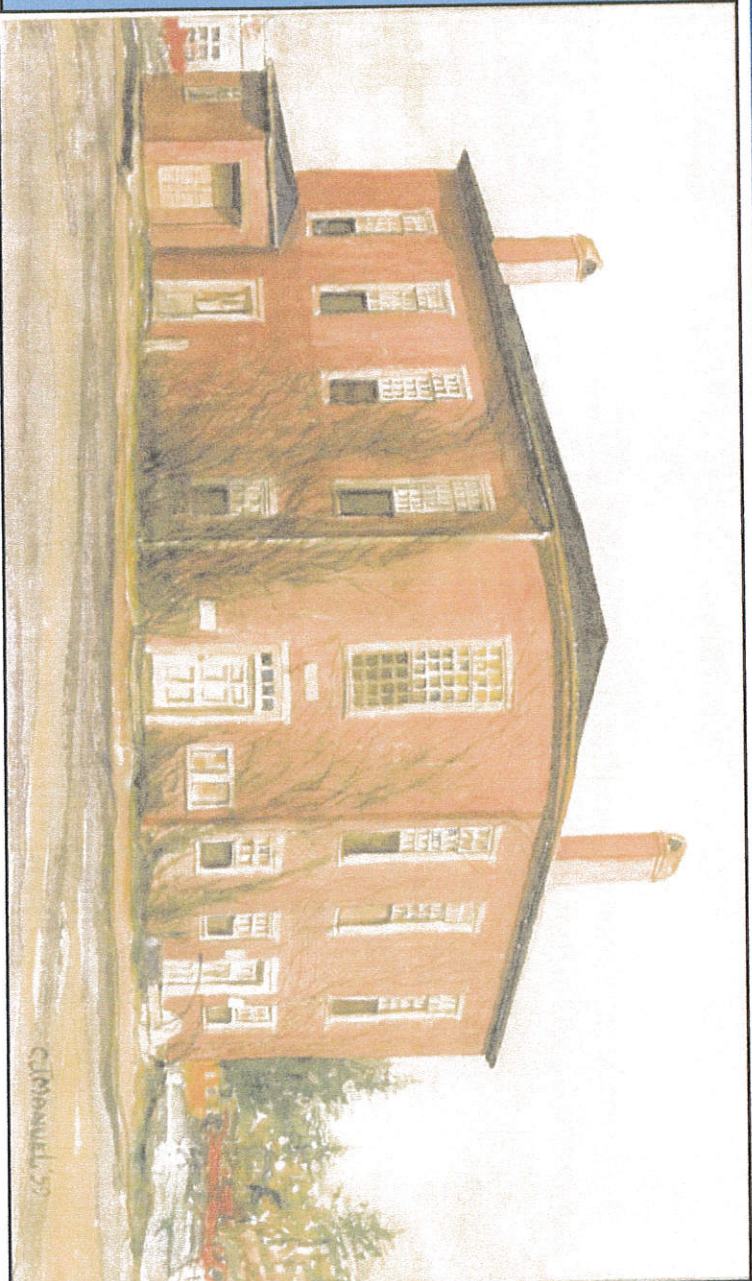


THE DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER #236

Sept. 2014

SEE WHAT'S INSIDE:

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Durham Town Hall 1850

painting by Charles J. Manuel 1959

Explore four centuries of Durham's history through our programs, museum, library, and newsletter by becoming a member of the Durham Historic Association. The museum is located on the second floor of the handsome, historic brick building at the crossroads of Main Street and Newmarket Road. See page 7 for membership information.

The Durham Historic Association
8 Newmarket Rd Durham NH 03824

<http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/community/come-visit-us-our-air-conditioned-museum>
Nancy Sandberg, President (603) 868-2350

THE HISTORY OF THE OLD DURHAM TOWN HALL AND OUR MUSEUM

The old Town Hall is an outstanding architectural example of a free-standing, brick, commercial structure, found only in the Piscataqua region, characterized by its three story height, curved corner bay and fine masonry.

It was built in 1825 as a store by local merchant and shipbuilder Joseph Coe. It reflects Durham's prosperity in the federal era as a trading center and connecting link between waterborne traffic and overland traffic from Portsmouth to Concord. From 1840 until recent times this building served as the seat of government for the town. In 1852 Langley & Butler, contractors, removed the third floor and lengthened the windows to create a gathering place for Town Meeting that symbolized the importance of the building for the growing town. Because the post office was also located here the building became the functional heart of the town. Joseph William Coe and Valentine Mathes followed each other as Postmasters and general store merchants.

In 1959 the Durham Selectman voted to allow the Durham Historic Association to use the second floor of the old brick Town Hall as a meeting place and museum dedicated to preserving books, documents and artifacts reflecting Durham's history.

The Durham Town Hall was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936 and is included in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Durham Historic District in 1980.



Joseph Coe was born in Durham June 1, 1782, the eldest son of Rev. Curtis Coe.